



Statement from the European Commission

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European Commission**

Honourable Ministers, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the European Commissioner for Development, M. Andris Piebalgs, it is an honour to convey this message of support to the Global Partnership for Education (GPE).

Let me first join others in thanking Carol for her leadership and campaigning making this conference possible. I'd also like to thank the host – Denmark – and the co-sponsors - Australia, Guyana, Ireland, Norway, Rwanda and Sweden.

We appreciate the approach taken by the GPE to this Pledging Conference, that is, inviting both financial and policy commitments from all partners: partner countries, donors, international organisations, civil society and private sector & foundations. This approach will contribute to forging a stronger Partnership, which builds on the comparative advantage of each partner and the shared responsibility of all to achieve results.

Education is a priority in the EU's development cooperation. We believe in the balanced development of the whole sector, building on the gains made in primary education in the last decade, and transforming them into further gains in sustainable human and social development and inclusive growth. We will reinforce our focus on the quality and equity of education.

The Commission's priority on education is reflected in our education support in the current programming cycle (2007/8-2013):

- We support education in 46 countries with a total amount of €3.9 billion:
- €2.2 billion for primary and secondary education,
- €0.5 billion for Technical and Vocational Education and Training ,
- €1.2 billion for the EU's higher education programmes with the developing world.

We accept working in difficult conditions. Out of the 46 countries we support, 17 are fragile or affected by conflict, so that €900 Million (or 33% of our funding to basic education and TVET) goes to these countries. We have recently committed new funding to Sudan, South Sudan (€12 million each) and Somalia (€30 million in addition to an earlier commitment of €55 million).

In our bilateral support to education, we will ensure good complementarity with support awarded from the GPE's trust fund. At country level we will continue to work actively within the Local Education Groups, which are the heart of the GPE.

In addition to direct support to education, we will continue to provide a substantial contribution via general budget support to countries many of which are GPE-endorsed. The total amount of general budget support amounts to €3.4 billion (2007/8-2013), out of which €2.3 billion for GPE-endorsed countries.

The Commission proposes to strengthen our commitment to education in our renewed development policy. In our "Agenda for Change", we propose that EU support should focus on those sectors which build the foundation for sustainable growth and help ensure that it is inclusive. These include education, health and social protection for all.

Therefore, in the multi-year budget for 2013-20, the Commission proposes to spend at least 20% of funds on human development and social inclusion. We seek an increase of volume, and a higher share going to countries most in need.

We will continue our active support to and engagement with the Global Partnership for Education. We have been on board since the beginning in 2002, and I am pleased to announce a new pledge today of €31.8 million (2011-2013) to the GPE Fund.

Honourable Ministers, Colleagues,

On behalf of EU Commissioner for Development, Mr Andris Piebalgs, let me ensure you that the European Commission looks forward to working together with all partners to strengthen the GPE as a platform for policy dialogue with strong roots in our partner countries.

Thank you for your attention.